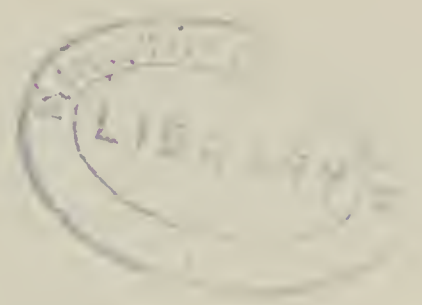
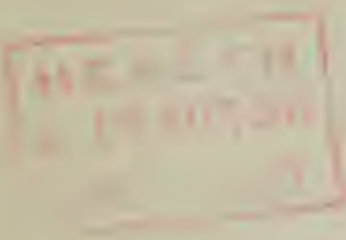


Library



RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WILLITON.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1955.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

C.F.R.KILLICK.,M.B.,Ch.B.,MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
R.B.PERRETT.,M.S.I.A.,CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR
A.F.M.HOWARD.,M.S.I.A.,ADDITIONAL SANITARY INSPECTOR
(To 30th April,1955)
A.P.L.WALLIS.,M.S.I.A.,ADDITIONAL SANITARY INSPECTOR
(From 1st May,1955)
R.J.ASHMAN, CLERK TO THE DEPARTMENT.

H.CHIDGEY,PART-TIME RODENT OPERATIVE (To 31st March,1955)
G.H.PEARCE, FULL-TIME RODENT OPERATIVE (From 31st March,1955)
BURNELLS GARAGE,WOOTTON COURTNEY - REFUSE COLLECTION
(By Contract).

WILLITON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE
YEAR 1955.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

Mr.Chairman,Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my annual report on the health and sanitation of the district for the year 1955. The general health of the district was satisfactory. The sanitary and other circumstances of the area are detailed as follows :-

Section A. Vital Statistics and Social Conditions.
Section B. Water Supplies,Sewage and Refuse Disposal.
Section C. Housing.
Section D. Food Inspection and Supplies.
Section E. Public Health Complaints,Nuisances,Etc.
Section F. Camping.
Section G. Other Acts administered by the Department.
Section H. Summary of Inspections and Visits made by the Department's Officers during the year 1955.

Section.A.
Vital Statistics & Social Conditions.

Area	97,369
Population (Estimated Mid-year	
Home Population)	13,170
Number of Dwelling Houses	4,150
Rateable Value (1st April,1955)	£71,141
Product of a Penny Rate	£325.2s.8d

<u>Live Births.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Legitimate	99	73	172
Illegitimate	2	5	7
Totals -	101	78	179

Birth Rate per 1000 population (live births)	13.59
National Rate per 1000 " 	15.00

<u>Still Births.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Legitimate	1	2	3
Illegitimate	-	-	-
Totals -	1	2	3

<u>Deaths.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Deaths from all causes :-	83	66	149

Death Rate per 1000 population	11.3
National " " " " 	11.7

Health Services.

The District is served by Hospitals at Minehead and Musgrove Park, Taunton,and Hospitals for the Aged Sick at Williton,Bridgwater and Taunton.

Ambulance services voluntarily run,are available from Watchet and Minehead,also from Musgrove Park Hospital,Taunton.

Steam disinfection facilities continue to be available at the Williton and District Hospital for the Aged Sick.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b30279331>

Notifiable Diseases.

<u>Disease.</u>	<u>Cases Notified.</u>
Smallpox	Nil
Scarlet Fever	3
Diphtheria	Nil
Enteric Fever	"
Measles	262
Whooping Cough	33
Puerperal Pyrexia	Nil
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	"
Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis	"
Dysentery	"
Malaria	"
Pneumonia	2
Acute Poliomyelitis	Nil
Encephalitis Lethargica	"
Chicken Pox	"
Erysipelas	2
Tuberculosis (Respiratory)	5
" (Non-Respiratory)	2
Food Poisoning	Nil.

There were no cases of Infantile Paralysis or Diphtheria. There was an epidemic of measles during the earlier part of the year resulting in 262 notified cases which is roughly twelve times the normal number. Whooping Cough cases numbered 33 which is also slightly above the average.

Main public health worries during the year concerned camping, litter, smell and other nuisances, aggravated by the very dry weather. I refer to these in some detail under the appropriate section.

Section B.

Water Supplies, Sewage & Refuse Disposal.

Water shortage was experienced towards the end of the very dry summer at West Hawkwell and Timberscombe, a scheme to supplement the West Hawkwell supply from the Cutcombe supply is being prepared. At Timberscombe it was possible to turn in an additional spring to boost the supply.

Improvements and extensions of supplies were made as follows :-
Allerford has been connected to the Minehead U.D.C main, Leighland has had pumping equipment installed and a new chlorinator has been provided for the Williton (Washford Road) supply.
The Old Cleeve supply, owned and maintained by the Commissioners for Crown Lands, has been improved in quantity and quality, by the addition of a new spring. The old spring, however, appears to fluctuate considerably.

During the year, an additional 5 existing, and 58 new dwellings have been connected to public supplies.
Bacteriological and Chemical sampling of water has continued and, on the whole shows some improvement on previous years. This is due to better collection area protection and more efficient maintenance on the part of private and public owners.

<u>Bacteriological</u> <u>Samples Taken.</u>	<u>Satisfactory.</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory.</u>
292	253	39

Private Water Supplies.

Bacteriological examination of used and proposed supplies was as follows :-

<u>Samples Taken.</u>	<u>Satisfactory.</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory.</u>
32	24	8

Refuse Disposal.

Arrangements for the collection and disposal of refuse have been the same as in the previous year. The four tips in use are of the semi-controlled type and have not given rise to any serious nuisance. The Rodent Operative has carried out regular treatments for **rats** and mice.

The dumping of household refuse, especially ashes, in watercourses, ditches and hedgerows, is a problem and an indication of the inadequacy of the collection service now operating.

Litter.

Four dozen litter baskets have been placed out in the district in an attempt to help solve this problem. Unfortunately many of the baskets did not arrive from the manufacturers in time for their use during the exceptional seasonal influx of visitors this last summer.

Much of the litter was noted in lay-bys and other stopping places on main roads indicating that the greatest offender is the person travelling through the district. It is hoped to increase the number of baskets before the next season. Emptying and disposing of the contents is a problem as very often baskets are full to overflowing within a matter of a few hours. However, the combined efforts of the refuse disposal contractors, the rodent operative and the Council's staff kept the baskets reasonably clear.

Section C.

Housing.

The total number of houses in the district is 4647; of these 645 are owned by the Local Authority.

The overall picture of housing within the district is one of improvement. This is being obtained by the combination of three lines of advance. Firstly, clearance of unfit houses. Details of the Council's slum clearance proposals were duly forwarded to the Ministry as required by the Housing Act, 1949. This stated that the estimated number of unfit houses in the district was 197 and of these, 120 were scheduled to be demolished within five years, the whole number to be dealt with within eight years. No Clearance Areas have been declared, action being taken under Section 11 of the Housing Act, 1936. This involved seven properties the future of which is still not settled. Three vacant properties have been voluntarily demolished.

Several houses have been made fit by informal action in the way of repairs, bringing them up to the legal standard for a fit house, and the improvement of houses to a modern standard with the aid of grants under the Housing Acts, 1949 and 1954 has proceeded steadily. In this way, a total of 26 houses have been made fit.

A big problem connected with the demolition or closure of unfit houses is the provision of alternative accommodation within a reasonable distance, for those persons displaced. Certain of the unfit houses are in isolated and outlying hamlets where the Local Authority have no intention of building new Council houses. This may mean that tenants might be obliged to accept alternative accommodation some miles away. Compared with 52 applications - concerning 60 houses - received for improvement grants during the preceeding seventeen months, 66 applications in respect of 75 dwellings have been dealt with. 12 applications have been approved, 16 rejected and 33 are still under consideration. 5 applications have been withdrawn. The average cost of improving dwellings was £640 and the average amount of grant given was £215. The maximum grant of £400 was given in one instance.

Of the 25 schemes completed during the year, five of the properties would have been, or were, the subject of action under Section 11 of the Housing Act, 1936, and would have been demolished or closed had it not been for grant aid. Financially it would appear that the average cost to the Local Authority per annum on each of the properties improved is in the region of £4.15s., which is more than offset by increased rateable values.

No Certificates of Disrepair have been applied for.

There are no Common Lodging Houses or Houses let in Lodgings within the district.

Section D.

Food Inspection & Supplies.

Slaughtering & Meat Inspection. There are seven private licenced slaughterhouses within the district and of these three are operating regularly and two occasionally. There are no bacon factories.

No horses have been slaughtered for human consumption.

Improvements have been made by the provision of automatic water troughs in some lairages.

Details of meat inspected follow, and it is interesting to note the low percentage of cattle affected with tuberculosis.

On the whole the animals killed have been of prime quality, there being none of the emaciated and aged types so prevalent during and immediately following the war years.

Meat inspection has entailed overtime working by both Inspectors amounting on an average to six hours per week and involving nearly 3000 miles travelling, apart from meat inspected whilst travelling for other public health matters.

Condemned meat and offal is still disposed of to local Hunt kennels and this arrangement is satisfactory.

Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part.

	Cattle Excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep & Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed	602	219	118	2723	567	Nil
Number inspected	602	219	118	2620	567	Nil
All diseases except T.B. and Cysticerci	Nil	1	1	7	Nil	Nil
Whole carcasses condemned						
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned.	56	17	1	33	8	Nil
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than T.B. and cysticerci	9.3%	8.2%	1.7%	1.1%	1.4%	Nil
T.B. only:						
Whole carcasses condemned	1	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Part or organ condemned	14	7	Nil	Nil	15	Nil
Percentage of the number inspected affected with T.B.	2.4%	3.6%	Nil	Nil	2.6%	Nil
Cysticercosis:						
Carcases affected	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Weight of Meat Condemned (Lbs)-						
(a) Tuberculosis	1225	884	Nil	Nil	280	Nil
(b) Cysticercosis	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
(c) Other	675	915	35	699	92	Nil
Total -	1900	1799	35	699	372	Nil

Other Foodstuffs Condemned :-

Tins of Meat & Fish	22	(Blown, damaged
" " Fruit & Veg.	9	(or
" " Condensed or		(otherwise unsound.
Evaporated milk	1	(
1 Turkey	9lbs.		(Decomposition).

Food Premises & Food Hygiene.

Routine inspections of catering establishments have been continued. Few requests for improvement of conditions have been found necessary. The Council has provided litter baskets near many of the cafes selling ice-cream and this has gone some way to solving the litter problem.

Section E.

Public Health Nuisances, Complaints, Etc.

A great number of complaints were received during the holiday season regarding litter deposited by visitors. Every attempt was made to clear this but with the exceptional number of visitors during the year conditions were not all that could be desired. Allied with these complaints, the indiscriminate use of hedgerows as toilets by campers was also a matter causing considerable concern. Not only did a nuisance exist, but much damage was done to hedges by people forcing their way through for this purpose. The area most affected was the Bossington district where illicit camping continued for several months along the foreshore by the type of camper who stayed for one night only. Here, disused limekilns were used as latrines to such an extent that it was impossible to enter them without contamination. Action was taken in one instance where filthy and verminous premises were found to exist. With the assistance of the refuse contractors and the Home Help service, the premises were thoroughly cleansed and this involved the removal of a complete load of articles and general filth. The house in question is occupied and owned by an aged lady whose condition is such that no action for removal can be taken under the National Assistance Act although this would certainly be in the best interests of the person concerned.

Few instances of flea infestation have been found and no bed bugs are known to exist within the district.

Concentrations of flies, hibernating in roof spaces, have been dealt with by the use of "Gammexane" smoke generators which have proved to be a very convenient and effective means of dealing with the matter. Several houses have been disinfected following the removal of persons suffering with infectious disease.

There have been no smoke nuisances.

Rodent Control.

A Rodent Operative has been employed full-time as from the commencement of this financial year, and effective control is now being maintained. The following treatments have been carried out :-

<u>Property.</u>	<u>Inspected.</u>	<u>Treated.</u>
Domestic	552	387
Agricultural	69	15
Business	18	14
Total:-	639	416

All sewer treatments have been carried out in accordance with requirements of the Ministry and "block control schemes" operated whenever practicable.

Section F.

Camping.

There are 16 licenced sites and 20 licences in force for individual moveable dwellings.

The number of caravanners and other types of camper visiting the district this year have been far above the average.

At the height of the season many calls were received from caravan site owners requesting that they be allowed to exceed the permitted number of vans, etc, as laid down in the licences issued. Each case was taken on its merits as it was realised that it was better to have an overcrowded site with sanitation rather than much illicit camping without. However, it was impossible to accommodate all the visitors thus and it is estimated that the daily average of the camping population rose, during the height of the season, from a normal figure of 20 to one of 3,500.

Nuisances pertaining to camping are dealt with in Section E.

Section G.
Other Acts Administered by the Department.

Factories Act.
There has been no material change in the number or size of factories in the district, there being 56 in all. No complaints have been received regarding working or other conditions. Inspections have been made from time to time. In one case a notice has been served requesting the provision of sanitary accommodation.

Pet Animals Act.
Rag Flock Act.
There are no Pet Shops within the district or premises dealing in Rag Flock.

Prevention of Damage by Pests Act.
Details of action taken under this Act are included under the heading of Rodent Control (Section E).

Section H.
Summary of Visits & Inspections.

<u>Housing Acts.</u>	Houses Inspected	413
	Informal Notices Served	21
	Formal Notices Served	7

<u>Public Health Acts.</u>	Inspection of Drainage & Sewerage	165
	" " Water Supplies	26
	" " Refuse Disposal	66
	" " Camping Sites	36
	Infectious Disease Investigations	3
	Filthy or Verminous Premises	
	Inspections	22
	Nuisances & Miscellaneous	
	Inspections	58
	Informal Notices Served	8

<u>Food & Drugs Act.</u>	Inspection of Food & Catering	
	Establishments	3
	" " Slaughter Houses &	
	Knackers Yards	19
	Notices Served	3
	" Complied with	3

Prevention of Damage by Pests Act.
Dealt with under Section 'E'.

Public Health Complaints Received	123
" " " Investigated	123

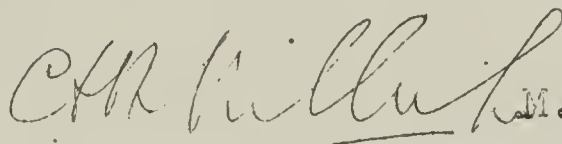
The year has seen the commencement of the National slum clearance drive. For our own part this has got under way but slowly as conditions and location, taking into consideration the needs of agriculture, present special problems not met with in urban areas.

Future sewerage requirements have been considered and a survey of existing drainage carried out in many localities providing useful data for future use.

Once again I would like to thank each member of the public health team for their work and co-operation during the year.

I am, Mr. Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

 M.B., Ch.B.
Medical Officer of Health.

